

REMARKS

Applicants have amended claims 1, 5, 6, 9, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 31-33, 35-37 and 39-47. Claims 2, 4, 7, 10, 12, 15, 18, 20, 23, 26-30, 34 and 48-50 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested.

The Office has rejected claims 1-3, 5-11, 13-19, 21-34 and 39-50 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,778,982 to Knight et al. (Knight) in view of U.S. Pat. Pub. 2002/0032735 to Burnstein et al. (Burnstein), claims 4, 12 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Knight in view of Burnstein and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,651,086 to Manber et al. (Manber), and claims 35-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Knight in view of Burnstein and further in view of U.S. Pat. Pub. 2002/0059164 to Shtivelman (Shtivelman). These rejections are respectfully traversed at least for the reasons provided below.

The Office assert Knight teaches a first kind of extraction robot that periodically retrieve content from outside sources and online message boards and then extracts content from these sources according to set of rules, filters or criteria specified by the online provider, and/ or gleaned from community based traffic monitoring. The Office acknowledges that Knight fails to teach a forum spawning device that queries a set of users when at least one of the at least one rules is satisfied and creates a new forum based on one or more replies from the set of users, but asserts Burnstein teaches an automatic telephone, internet or intranet community formation that contacts currently searching and the previously searching users and asks them if they want to join a new community on the topic of the search string in the following manner. The Office asserts in Burnstein the user currently searching is contacted automatically and if that person indicates their interest in joining a community then the second action is to locate non-searching user(s) in the matched field and contacted them and ask if they want to join this community. The Office asserts that in Burnstein if each answers in the affirmative, a new community is formed automatically and the users are entered as members of that community (See page 8, paragraph [0098]). The Office asserts it would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate forum spawning device that queries a set of users when at least one of the at least one rules is satisfied and creates a new forum based on one or more

replies from the set of users as taught by Burnstein in the system disclosed in Knight in order to invite the match parties to join a frictionless and immediate electronic community if they so desire (See page 1, paragraph [0013]).

Knight, Burnstein, Manber and Shtivelman, taken alone or in combination, do not suggest or disclose, “an information monitoring device that monitors one or more electronic documents in an information stream associated with a first electronic forum, and compares information about the one or more electronic email documents to one or more rules . . . a forum spawning device that queries a set of users participating in the first forum when at least one of the one or more rules is satisfied, and creates a new electronic forum based on one or more replies from the set of users; and a subscriber determining device that determines which of the queried users indicate interest in the new electronic forum and subscribes each interested user to the new electronic forum, but does not subscribe users of the set who do not indicate interest in the new electronic forum,” as recited in amended claim 1, “monitoring one or more email documents in an information stream associated with a first forum; comparing information about the one or more electronic documents to one or more rules; querying a set of users participating in the first electronic forum when at least one of the one or more rules is satisfied; creating a new electronic forum automatically based on one or more replies from the set of users; and subscribing each queried user of the set indicating interest in the new electronic forum to the new electronic forum, but not subscribing to the new electronic forum users of the set who do not indicate interest,” as recited in claims 9 and 17.

As disclosed on page 4, lines 3-24 in the above-identified patent application, the present invention monitors an information stream associated with a first electronic forum with an information monitoring device. A set of users participate in the first electronic forum for example, by sending or receiving electronic email documents over the information stream. Information about one or more of these documents is compared to one or more rules. If one of the rules is satisfied, a set of users who are participating in the first electronic forum are queried by the forum spawning device. Responsive to the replies from the queried users, the forum spawning device may create a new electronic forum. Thus, by way of example only, if members of a newsgroup started to post messages related to a topic that was determined (by a rule) to not be within the topic of the newsgroup, the invention would query users of the newsgroup whether a new newsgroup should be created. Responsive to the replies to the queries, the invention could generate a new newsgroup with the new topic.

As set forth at col. 5, line 63 to col. 27, Knight teaches a bulletin board system that searches for and classifies content in order to provide a more useful interface to a user of an online message board to assist the user in finding his/her desired information by information categories or via a user query. Knight simply addresses the problem of finding desired information on an online message board where the messages are incorrectly classified in existing forums (for example, where messages have been sent to the wrong discussion group). Knight does this by classifying the content in user submitted documents (postings), as described at col. 8, lines 48-54 and at col. 8, line 66 to col. 9, line 2, as well as user queries and allowing the user to search on the classified content instead of forcing the user to be constrained by a forum. Knight classifies information posted by users as well as information found by bots from internal and external sources. Knight does not teach or even suggest a need to spawn a new electronic forum because the purpose of Knight is to find desired information in a forum-independent manner based on the content of the available information, as disclosed at col. 14, line 56 to col. 15, line 14.

As disclosed in paragraphs [0013], [0078], [0018], [0082], [0020], [0085], [0023], [0087], [0036], [0100], [0089], [0137], [0037], [0101], [0069] and [0138], Burnstein teaches tracking search strings, matching those who have used similar search strings, and proposing to those who have used similar search strings that they form a community (basically a news group). Burnstein assumes those who have made similar searches will have a common interest. Accordingly, Burnstein teaches matching users by the search strings they have provided, not by monitoring available documents in an information stream. Nothing in Burnstein suggests monitoring documents in a first electronic forum. Additionally, Burnstein does not teach querying a set of users who are participating in the first forum, but instead Burnstein teaches querying people who have provided similar search strings. Accordingly, even if Knight is considered in view of Burnstein, as suggested by the Office, it would not teach the claimed combinations. Further, the Office has not established any motivation for why one of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to combine an online content system for creating, compiling and presenting content to subscribers which includes the use of search bots as disclosed in Knight with an automatic telephone, Internet or intranet community formation system that matches users based upon entered search strings, as disclosed in Burnstein other than by using impermissible hindsight after viewing the present invention.

Like Knight and Burnstein, the other references cited by the Office, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the claimed combination.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Office is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of independent claims 1, 9 and 17. Since claims 3, 5, 6, 8, 31, 35 and 39-41 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 1, claims 11, 13, 16, 32, 36 and 42-44 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 9, and claims 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 33, 37 and 45-47 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 17, they are distinguishable over the cited references and are patentable in the same manner as independent claims 1, 9 and 17.

In view of all of the foregoing, Applicants submit that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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/Sean A. Pryor, Reg. # 48103/
Sean A. Pryor

NIXON PEABODY LLP
Clinton Square, P.O. Box 31051
Rochester, New York 14603-1051
Telephone: (585) 263-1014
Facsimile: (585) 263-1600